



Wildlands Update for February

Nature in February: Common ravens and red squirrels begin pairing off. In late February, chickadees begin singing and searching for nest sites. As the weather warms, shrews and voles may venture above the snow. Look for their tracks near carcasses and birdfeeders. Black bears have been seen at Campbell Tract with warmer temperatures (in late January) and will be emerging for good in mid-April. Check out video of outdoor adventures in Southcentral Alaska at www.adn.com/excursions To view the weather at your destination, check:

<http://akweathercams.faa.gov/allcams.php>

Online Snow-Depth Gauges:

For current snow-depth information around the state, please go to <http://ambcs.org/SiteViewer.shtml>

Avalanche Safety:

Alaska led the nation in avalanche deaths from 1995-2005 with an average of 5.5 deaths per year. For information on avalanche conditions or classes, call the appropriate agency or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/glacier/snow.html>

Road Closures

The Denali, Taylor, and Top of the World Highways are closed for the winter and other highways are experiencing snowy or icy conditions. The Denali Park Road is closed at Mile 3. For updated road conditions throughout the state, visit <http://511.alaska.gov/> or dial 511 in Alaska, (866) 282-7577 outside Alaska. Remember to carry extra clothing in your vehicle for emergencies. For road condition webcams: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/iways/roadweather/forms/AreaSelectForm.html>

Firewood Gathering

Chugach National Forest:

For firewood see

http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/news_releases/firewood.html

Alaska Department of Natural Resources:

Contact your local Division of Forestry to find out where cutting is allowed and how to obtain a permit. See <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/divdir.htm> for your local contact. Both commercial and personal use firewood on state land requires a permit.

Alaska State Parks

2008 State Park day-use passes are available for \$40 each or \$60 for two. Boat Launch passes cost \$75 each or \$100 for two. Passes are available on-line and at the AAPLIC, DNR Public Information Center, Potter Section House, REI, AMH, and Sportsman's Warehouse.

Chugach State Park:

There are areas within Chugach State Park that are open to snow machines, including the Eagle River Access at Mile 7.4 of Eagle River Road and Bird Valley (as of 1/26). Closures may occur with warming temperatures. Check the status of all areas by calling (907) 269-8400 and pressing extension "1" or visit:

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/snowmach.htm>

Campgrounds are closed, but the cabins and yurts at Eklutna and Eagle River Nature Center remain open year-round. Group reservations for Eklutna begin February 4. Call (907) 345-5014 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/chugachwinter.pdf>

Matsu Area State Parks:

Independence Mine / Hatcher Pass: Parts of the east side of Hatcher Pass are open to snowmachining. Groomed x-country trails are available. Beware of avalanche danger. For more information, visit <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/hpsnowreport.pdf>

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area:

Recent wet snows have brought down trees; crews are still clearing effected trails. Nancy Lake Parkway and the winter

trailhead have been plowed. Cabins are open year-round. Watch for thin ice at inlets and outlets. Call (907) 495-6273.

Denali State Park:

Denali State Park is open to the use of snowmachines and other registered off-highway vehicles. Curry & Kesugi Ridges have less snow and tundra plants are at risk to damage. Veterans' Memorial is closed, but park cabins at Byers Lake remain open. For snow and safety information in Matsu Area State Parks, call (907) 745-8950 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/nancydenali.htm>

Kenai Peninsula Parks:

Kachemak Bay:

There are no ranger services during the winter, so be prepared for emergencies and delays due to weather. Nomad Shelters will be operating two yurts this winter at Humpy Creek and Wright Beach; call (907) 235-0132. For general information, call (907) 262-5581.

Caines Head:

Thumb Cove and Callisto cabins are open for rental; Derby Cove is closed for repairs until May.

Kenai River Area:

Try ice fishing on the lakes, but remember that travel on the ice is at your own risk. For ice and snow pack conditions, call Alaska State Parks in Soldotna at (907)262-5581 or the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at (907)262-7021.

Some good websites

Alaska outdoor information:

<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

Alaska weather information:

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

Alaska Volcano Observatory :

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

Sunrise-Sunset:

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/>

Road Conditions:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Check out the monthly publication "Alaska Fish and Wildlife News" at

<http://www.wildlifeneews.alaska.gov/>

Bureau of Land Management

The Denali Highway is closed.

Campgrounds remain open year-round, but there are no services. The Iditarod starts on Saturday, March 1st, at the corner of 4th and D in Anchorage. The Alaska Public Lands Information Center will be open that day from 8:00a.m. to 2:00p.m.

National Park Service

Join the National Parks Conservation Association for the Alaska National Parks Discovery Series offered monthly at 7:00p.m. at the Alaska Wild Berry Theatre. February 12 will feature the cultural history of Lake Clark NP & Preserve. All programs are free to the public.

Kenai Fjords National Park

remains open year-round, but all visitor centers are closed for the winter. Exit Glacier Road is closed at the first gate. ATVs are not allowed in the park, even on the road, but the road IS open to snowmachine use (areas that are restricted are posted on bulletin boards and signs). The park is taking reservations for the Willow Public Use Cabin at Exit Glacier by calling (907) 224-7500, Monday-Friday 8a.m. to 5p.m. or in-person at park headquarters in Seward. Visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>

Denali National Park and Preserve

Riley Creek Campground is kept open for the winter, but water has been turned off. A vault toilet is provided for campers and water can be obtained at the Murie Science and Learning Center. All other campgrounds are closed. The Murie Science and Learning Center, located at Mile 1.3 on the park road, is functioning as the winter visitor center from 9a.m. to 4p.m. daily. Starting in February, the park will have guided snowshoe walks on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:00p.m. unless the temperature is below -10 degrees. The park offers free check-out of winter recreation gear for use in the park. Doyon/ARAMARK is accepting reservations for shuttle buses and campgrounds for 2008. Reservations can be made by phone, on-line, mail, and fax. The Teklanika River Campground will be open to tents and RVs this year. Call (907) 683-2294 or go to <http://www.nps.gov/dena>

Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

The visitor center is open year-round 8a.m. to 4:30p.m. weekdays and 10a.m. to 5p.m. on Saturdays through March. February 9 is Winter Fun Day with activities for children and adults. There are also 13 public use cabins for rent on the refuge. Snowmachine use opened in December. Check the web for restricted areas at

<http://kenai.fws.gov/>

National Forest Service

Chugach National Forest

Try cross-country skiing or, if conditions are right, ice skating on Portage Lake. Make sure you contact the Glacier Ranger District for current safety conditions. Turnagain Pass, the Lost Lake Area, Resurrection Pass, Johnson Pass, the Carter /Crescent area, and the Cooper Lake area are open to motorized use. Campgrounds are gated but campers are welcome to walk in. Visitors must practice minimum impact. For information, call the Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242 or the Seward Ranger District (907) 224-3374 or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/rio/chugach/>

Urban Public Lands

Municipality of Anchorage and the MatSu Borough

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Activity Guide and calendar are now available on-line. Check their website at <http://www.muni.org/parks/> for pond hockey, broom ball, and super soaker nights. MOA has begun a bi-weekly Trail of the Week program for cross-country skiers. Science for Alaskans lectures for this month include Science Nuggets on 2/6 and Climate Change on 2/13. These free lectures are held on Wednesdays at 7:00p.m. at the Wendy Williamson Auditorium on the UAA campus. There will be a Marine Debris Workshop February 14 -15 at the Egan Center. For details, visit alaskaseagrant.org/conferences

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Eagle River Nature Center

Located at mile 12 of Eagle River Road, ERNC is open Fridays and weekends 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Many winter programs are offered; February 16 is Night with the Stars, a yearly dinner with music and entertainment. ERNC rents its facility, a cabin, two yurts, and snowshoes. Call for updates on the Crow Pass trail at (907) 694-2108 or go to <http://www.ernc.org>

Campbell Creek Science Center

The visitor center is open Monday - Friday 7:30a.m. to 4:00p.m. The Thursday night Astronomy Series lecture for February 14 is "Planets." The Fireside Chat on February 20 is "The Vikings, Glaciers, and Climate Change." Both programs begin at 7:00p.m. February 16th is Winter Trails Day from 10:30a.m. to 4p.m. and will include outdoor activities, hot drinks, cookies and roasted marshmallows. Call (907) 267-1247 or check the website at

<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html>

Begich-Boggs Visitor Center

The visitor center has closed for the winter except for education programs. Call (907) 783-2326 for more information or visit the website at

http://www.fs.fed.us/rio/chugach/chugach_pages/bbvc.html

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center

The visitor center is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5:00pm, closed on holidays. There are Discovery Labs on Wednesdays 3:00-5:00pm and programs on weekends. Call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandocan.org>

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The **Downtown Anchorage** location is open 10a.m.-5p.m. Monday-Friday, closed February 18th. Movies are available on request (if not previously scheduled by school classes). The center is open on Iditarod Day 8:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. Call (907) 644-3661 or 1-866-869-6887. Check out the website at <http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

The **Fairbanks** location is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10a.m.-5p.m., closed February 18th for President's Day. The Explore Alaska Lecture Series takes place on Thursday evenings at 7p.m. Call (907) 456-0527 for details and the schedule of daily movies.

The **Tok Center** location is open Monday to Friday 8a.m.-4:30p.m. Call (907) 883-5667 for more information or (888) 256-6784 for Alaska Marine Highway reservations.



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